

Transactions

MAY/JUNE 2006

TRANSPORTATION NEWS
FOR THE NINE-COUNTY
SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA



On Display

The New East Span In Vivid Color — And Black and White

The construction activity on the monumental new East Span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge is largely invisible to motorists crossing the corridor. Now, two exhibits at MTC's Oakland offices take viewers into the heart of the construction zone, and face to face with the men and women who are putting the span together, humongous piece by humongous piece.

The east hallway of MTC's new second floor offices (unveiled at the agency's 35th anniversary celebration in early April) features dramatic color images of the project taken from land, the water and the air by Caltrans District 4 photographers Bill Hall and John Huseby.

The opposite hallway features black and white images by San Francisco photographer Joseph A. Blum, who has devoted hundreds of hours of his time to documenting the East Span project since the start of soil sampling more than five years ago, amassing thousands of images along the way.

— Brenda Kahn

The photo exhibits can be viewed at the Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter weekdays between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. through August 31, 2006. Visitors must check in with MTC's third floor receptionist to access the second floor at the MetroCenter. For more information, contact Brenda Kahn, coordinator of the MTC Community Art Program, at 510.817.5773.



Crews lift the massive, 1,700-ton steel transitional deck segment that will join the eastbound Skyway with the self-anchored suspension span.

New East Span: Bold, Beautiful and Back On Track After More Than a Year of Delays

BID FOR TOWER ELEMENT COMES IN UNDER BUDGET

It takes gargantuan tools to build a public works project on the scale of the new East Span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. But in April, it was a simple pen that put the mega project back on track and headed for completion by 2013. At a bayside ceremony, Caltrans Director Will Kempton affixed his signature to a letter awarding, at last, the contract for the self-anchored suspension span (SAS) that will be the crowning piece of the new East Span.

The signing ceremony coincided with the centennial of the 1906 great San Francisco earthquake. The timing emphasized that the new East Span is first and foremost a seismic safety project.

"The bridge's funding is secure and we have a good bid. We're able

to start work," Kempton said.

Standing by his side at the historic event, which took place at a San Francisco pier with a TV-perfect view of the existing Bay Bridge, were Steve Heminger, executive director of MTC and its Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA),

and John Barna, executive director of the California Transportation Commission (CTC). The two agencies have joined with Caltrans to form the Toll Bridge Program Oversight Committee (TBPOC), which is charged with delivering the East Span within the revised budget and schedule established by the state Legislature in the summer of 2005.

"All great bridges set new standards for innovation. We expect this bridge will do the same," said Heminger.

The bold and technically challenging SAS was put on hold for many months while the state re-bid the construction contract in an effort to bring down costs. A collective sigh of relief was nearly audible among the TBPOC members when the process yielded two solid bids on March 22.

Less than 30 days later, on April 18, Caltrans officials awarded the contract to the lower bidder, a joint-venture team of Pennsylvania-based American Bridge and Fluor Enterprises of Aliso Viejo, Calif. Their price of \$1.43 billion is within the Caltrans engineers' updated estimate for the project of \$1.45 billion. Moreover, American Bridge played a major role in building the Bay Bridge back in the 1930s.



The Skyway is taking shape just north (and in this photo, to the right) of the existing East Span.

The new East Span is taking shape just to the north of the seismically weak existing East Span, which fractured in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. Already, the Skyway portion of the new East Span is more than 85 percent complete, and juts a mile or so into the Bay from the Oakland shore.

Featuring a single tower rising 525 feet above the waterline, the SAS will connect the Skyway with Yerba Buena Island.

The East Span is scheduled to open to vehicle traffic in the westbound direction in 2012 and in the eastbound direction in 2013. Contractor incentives can potentially shorten the overall project construction by up to six months.

"We are looking forward to having a seismically safe bridge, and a stunning addition to the region's skyline," said the CTC's Barna.

— Brenda Kahn



Against a cloth backdrop with a rendering of the new East Span, Caltrans Director Will Kempton signs the contract award letter.

Calendar

Unless indicated otherwise, all meetings take place at: Metropolitan Transportation Commission Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter Lawrence D. Dahms Auditorium 101 Eighth Street, Oakland (Across from the Lake Merritt BART station)

Thursday
JUNE 1, 2006

10:30 am
Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee

Monday
JUNE 5, 2006

9:30 am
Bay Area Partnership Board*
Nile Hall, Preservation Park
668 13th Street, Oakland

Friday
JUNE 9, 2006

9:30 am
Planning Committee*
10 am
Operations Committee*
10:30 am
Legislation Committee*

Monday
JUNE 12, 2006

1:30 pm
Partnership Technical Advisory Committee
2 pm
TransLink® Operating Group
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency
1 South Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco

Tuesday
JUNE 13, 2006

3:30 pm
Minority Citizens Advisory Committee

Wednesday
JUNE 14, 2006

9:30 am
Bay Area Toll Authority
Oversight Committee*
9:45 am
Administration Committee*
10 am
Programming and Allocations Committee*
12:30 pm
MTC Advisory Council

Thursday
JUNE 15, 2006

9:30 am
Regional Pedestrian Committee
MetroCenter, Room 171
1 pm
Regional Bicycle Working Group
MetroCenter, Room 171

Monday
JUNE 26, 2006

2 pm
TransLink® Management Group
AC Transit, 10th Floor Conference Room
1600 Franklin Street, Oakland

Wednesday
JUNE 28, 2006

10 am
Bay Area Toll Authority*
10:05 am
Service Authority for Freeways
and Expressways*
10:10 am
Metropolitan Transportation Commission*

*Webcast on <www.mtc.ca.gov>.

Note: Dates, times and locations of MTC meetings may change. Please confirm by calling 510.817.5757. Agendas, updated meeting schedules and meeting packets are posted on MTC's Web site: <www.mtc.ca.gov>.

Announcement

511 Is Making Friends

We know you already love our free and helpful traffic, transit, rideshare and bicycling information available at 511.org. But now you and your friends all over the Bay Area can officially become Friends of 511. Not just because you love us, but also because you want to be the first to know about exciting 511 news and updates. Sign up today at 511.org.

Announcement

Excellence in Motion:
Call for Award Nominations



MTC’s biennial Transportation Awards Program recognizes innovations that improve the transportation network; educational programs that promote safety, the use of public transit and the like; activities that encourage alternatives to driving alone; volunteers who help brighten our daily commutes; efforts to boost smart growth; and members of the media who do an exceptional job.

In addition to seeking entries for the broad categories above, MTC is inviting nominations for five special awards:



Doris W. Kahn Accessible Transportation Award

Honors a person or organization whose efforts have benefited the elderly or persons with disabilities.



John F. Foran Legislative Award

Honors a state or federal legislator whose work has had a positive effect on transportation.



Greta Ericson Distinguished Service Award

Recognizes quality leadership in the transportation profession.



David Tannehill Special Employee Award

Intended for a transportation employee who goes beyond the call of duty.



Miriam Gholikely Award

Celebrates accomplishments in the fields of community service, volunteerism, advocacy, leadership and minority affairs.

The deadline for nominations is Monday, June 12, 2006. To submit your nomination online, visit the MTC Web site at <www.mtc.ca.gov> or call 510.817.5757 to request an application.

Project Update

West Approach to Bay Bridge Enters Critical Phase — Drivers Must Navigate Challenging New Course

It might not be as glamorous a project as the new East Span (see story on front page), but the retrofit-by-replacement of the West Approach is every bit as essential to the earthquake safety of the 70-year-old San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge.

Work crews are removing and replacing the West Approach even as more than 260,000 vehicles a day traverse the mile-long elevated structure through downtown San Francisco. The complex and delicate operation is entering a critical new phase that, as of June 3, will involve a temporary and somewhat unusual lane reconfiguration for motorists coming off the upper deck of the bridge into San Francisco.

Officials also are warning drivers to brace themselves for major traffic disruptions during the weekends of June 2–5 and June 9–12 due to the demolition of a key segment of the existing structure. Caltrans is planning to shut the eastbound approach and the lower

deck of the Bay Bridge overnight on both weekends, while also detouring westbound traffic onto city streets for a stretch. In addition, Caltrans is planning to close San Francisco’s First Street and Essex Street on-ramps to the bridge — as well as the bus on-ramp — throughout these weekends.

To help offset the inconvenience to transbay travelers, BART will provide 24-hour service across the Bay the first two weekends in June.

MTC’s Bay Area Toll Authority is playing a central role in financing and overseeing the \$429 million project, which is now in its fourth year and scheduled for completion in mid-2009.

In addition to the ongoing West Approach work, another project to resurface the pavement on both the upper and lower decks of the West Span of the bridge proper will require various lanes to be closed intermittently beginning in May and extending through late 2006.

— John Goodwin



The Split Is Coming: Beginning June 3, motorists on westbound Interstate 80 will face a brand new lane alignment as they come off the upper deck of the Bay Bridge, with the fourth lane from the left offering an especially tricky departure from the ordinary. Known to traffic engineers as the #4 lane, this and the neighboring #5 lane will both veer right and away from the mainline freeway toward the Fremont Street/Folsom Street offramp. And while the #5 lane will offer a straightforward exit-only route, the #4 lane will give drivers the unusual choice of either exiting at Fremont Street, or continuing west and rejoining the mainline freeway several hundred yards downstream. Motorists also will have to adjust to a new Fifth Street offramp, which is being relocated a half-mile down the road. For updates, stay tuned to <www.baybridgeinfo.org>.

In Brief

Share the Ride,
Earn Rewards

Now there’s one more reason to share the ride besides saving on gas and tolls. Under the new 511 Rideshare Rewards program sponsored by MTC together with Safeway, new carpoolers can earn \$10 in Safeway or gas gift cards for every five days they carpool, up to \$100 within a three-month period. At the end of the year, 511 Rideshare will hold a drawing to award \$1,000 to a lucky commuter who has carpooled at least 40 days during the program.

Commuters have until July 31, 2006, to sign up. The grocery and gas reward cards will be distributed to at least the first 500 commuters who participate.

For more information, go to 511.org or call 511 and say “Ridesharing.”



New “Owl” Transit Service
Crisscrosses the Bay

“Now transit stays up as late as you do.” That’s the motto of a new late-night intercity bus service connecting most BART stations from approximately 1 a.m. to 5 a.m., when the regional rail system is normally shut down. The “All Nighter” service was launched in March with the help of \$1.8 million from Regional Measure 2 bridge tolls administered by MTC. Five transit agencies — AC Transit, County Connection, SamTrans, San Francisco Muni and WHEELS — have joined together to provide the interlocking network of bus routes.

“The service should appeal to late-night workers, particularly in the hotel and restaurant industries, as well as people who want to stay out late without the hassles of driving home,” said MTC Planner Vince Petrites.

For more information, visit the transit page at 511.org or call 511 and say “All Nighter.”

In Print

Annual Report Focuses on
Bridge Upgrade Program

You *can* tell a book by its cover, at least in the case of MTC’s 2005 *Annual Report*. The front features a close-up photo of a massive pre-



cast concrete deck segment being lifted into place on the new East Span of the San Francisco-

Oakland Bay Bridge. The interplay of form and shadow makes for an intriguing abstract image, and signals the report’s theme: “Bay Area Bridges: Stronger. Sleeker. Safer.”

View online at <www.mtc.ca.gov/library>; to order a hard copy, contact <library@mtc.ca.gov> or call 510.817.5836.

Commission Actions

March/April 2006

- Awarded \$250,000 as a local match for the Golden Gate Bridge Suicide Barrier Deterrent System Study. MTC earlier provided \$1.6 million in federal funding for the study, which will involve development of design concepts for a suicide barrier and wind tunnel testing of these designs. **MTC Resolution 3018-Revised**
- Updated the Regional Transit Expansion Program to reflect changes in project cost, funding and scope; to add five new or expanded ferry routes as well as improvements to the San Francisco ferry terminal; and to include a candidate project for the federal Small Starts Program: AC Transit’s Bus Rapid Transit line along the Telegraph/International/East 14th Street corridor. **MTC Resolution 3434-Revised**
- Adopted a Strategic Plan for the agency that calls for intensifying MTC’s efforts in the realms of freeway management, goods movement, high-occupancy/toll lanes and emergency response. Also adopted a 511 Strategic Plan that calls for enhancements to the regional traveler information service. **MTC Resolutions 3744 and 3754**

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